



49775 Ellis Road, North Powder, OR 97867

TESTIMONY –
HB 2785, HB 2786, HB 2787
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
February 4, 2021

Chair Witt and Members of the Committee,

My name is Wendy Bingham of Bingham Beef. My family and I operate a cattle ranch in North Powder, Oregon. We sell beef directly to local consumers as well as consumers in other states. It has become very apparent, since the beginning of the pandemic last March, people are looking to find protein sources that they know, trust, have a connection to who treat their animals humanely.

In order to provide beef directly to consumers, we are required to have our meat inspected by a USDA Inspector. This is important to ensure safety in processing, protecting the meat supply. We currently travel to Idaho to a processing facility about 2.5 hours away to have our meat cut and packaged and frozen to USDA standards before returning to pick it up and bring it back to North Powder. The travel time in this process is cumbersome and affects not only our productivity but adds miles to our vehicles and cost to our operation.

We have processing facilities near our ranch within a half of an hour that do a great job in butchering, however, due to the lack of a USDA certification, we are unable to use their services for the products we sell direct to consumers. If these facilities were able to become USDA inspected, it would greatly benefit the opportunities to participate in programs of direct sales providing additional local meat within Oregon which in turn adds to the local economy.

During this past year we received phone calls and inquiries from our website from people asking if we could process their meat for them and where we get our meat processed because of the bottleneck that occurred for processors during the pandemic. Unfortunately, these producers were placed on long wait lists at the facilities where they do have their meat processed.

We considered starting a USDA facility and found that it would be so overwhelming financially to get the proper equipment and permits that we dismissed the idea. Our discussions with our current processor informed us packaging machines alone were very costly and must come from Italy.

Providing a safe product that is humanely raised is of utmost importance to our operation. I support HB2785, HB2786 and HB2787 to ensure safety in meat inspection through a state meat inspection program that meets or exceeds USDA standards.

Thank you for accepting my testimony for the record in support of HB 2785, HB 2786, and HB 2787.

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